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Organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework

Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

I. Introduction

1. The Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has considered the report of the Secretary-General on the organizational resilience management system: emergency management framework (A/67/266). During its consideration of the report, the Advisory Committee met with representatives of the Secretary-General, who provided additional information and clarification.

2. In its resolution 66/247, the General Assembly took note of the organizational resilience management system approach set out in the Secretary-General's previous report on this question (A/66/516), on the understanding that a follow-up report to be submitted to the Assembly at its sixty-seventh session would present a complete picture of the comprehensive emergency management framework. The Secretary-General's current report is submitted in response to that resolution.

II. Background, objectives and scope

3. In his report, the Secretary-General states that, given the changing nature of the threats faced by the United Nations, which may include military or terrorist-related incidents, critical infrastructure failures or natural hazard events, emergency preparedness and resilience are of the utmost importance when planning and delivering mandated activities both at Headquarters and in the field. Accordingly, he indicates that, in 2010, the senior emergency policy team approved a proposal to pilot an organizational resilience management system approach at United Nations Headquarters. Since then, the system (also referred to as the emergency management

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framework), which is based on an international standard (see para. 6 below), has emerged from the pilot phase and been further developed (see A/67/266, paras. 1-4).

4. In section II of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that the main objective of the organizational resilience management system is to establish a comprehensive approach to emergency management, from preparation to response and recovery. He envisages that, for the Secretariat, the system will allow for the adoption of common policies and procedures, governance and activation mechanisms, thereby avoiding a "silo" approach to emergency management wherein Secretariat entities develop emergency plans that do not take into account their relationships, linkages and mutual dependencies. The emergency management framework also provides the Organization with a means to monitor the various ongoing preparedness activities. The Secretary-General anticipates that the framework will yield the following benefits: enhanced risk management; improved crisis decision-making; and harmonization of the approach to emergency management (A/67/266, paras. 5, 7 and 11).

5. The Secretary-General describes the envisaged scope of the system in paragraphs 12 and 13 of his report. As discussed in paragraphs 15 to 17 below, the system has already been implemented at Headquarters and will be extended to offices away from Headquarters and field offices by the end of 2013. In addition, experience gained during the inter-agency pandemic planning and business continuity planning exercises points to the potential value of adopting a common emergency management framework covering the entire United Nations system (see also paras. 18 and 19 below).

III. Framework and methodology

6. As indicated in paragraphs 16 to 22 of the Secretary-General's report, the organizational resilience management system is based on an international standard on risk management devised by the International Organization for Standardization. It comprises the following five consecutive steps:

(a) Policy establishment, which involves detailing the precursors, purpose, implementation process, outcomes and deliverables of the initiative and obtaining senior management approval;

(b) Planning, entailing a risk assessment of the natural, political, social, security and technological environment to determine potential disruptions to United Nations operations in a given location, as well as the impact of those risks, followed by the establishment of measurable objectives and targets;

(c) Implementation, involving the assignment of roles and responsibilities, the identification of necessary human and financial resources and equipment and infrastructure, a structured maintenance, exercise and review regime and a communications plan;

(d) Evaluation, which will be conducted using feedback from the maintenance, exercise and review regime;

(e) Management review.

Figure II in the Secretary-General's report provides a schematic overview of the five steps of the cycle.

IV. Key players

7. In paragraphs 24 to 41 of his report, the Secretary-General outlines the key players in the organizational resilience management system. The roles and responsibilities of the various departments and offices in the development and implementation of the system can be summarized as follows:

(a) Department of Management: serves as the lead department for the system and is responsible for developing, coordinating and integrating policy, planning, implementation and review procedures and processes. It is also responsible for providing assistance in implementing the system to other Secretariat departments and offices in New York, as well as to offices away from Headquarters, including the regional commissions. Upon request, the Department will provide implementation assistance to field operations;

(b) Business Continuity Management Unit, Office of Central Support Services: responsible for providing guidance and hands-on support for the business continuity planning process at Headquarters and offices away from Headquarters;

(c) Emergency Preparedness and Support Team, Office of Human Resources Management: charged with providing and coordinating the provision of essential support to staff of the United Nations system, including survivors and the families of those who perish or are injured as a result of malicious acts, natural disasters or other emergencies (see also paras. 8-10 below);

(d) Medical Services Division, Office of Human Resources Management: responsible for providing all United Nations duty stations with policy, guidance, support and training on public health emergencies and mass casualty incidents. The Division also coordinates the preparatory and response work of the inter-agency United Nations Medical Emergency Response Team;

(e) Department of Safety and Security: oversees the security management system, including security planning and its integration into the organizational resilience management system. The Division of Headquarters Safety and Security Services of the Department provides crisis planning capabilities and is responsible for crisis management plans and security and contingency plans for Headquarters, offices away from Headquarters and the regional commissions. The Division of Regional Operations is responsible for the coordination of contingency planning, crisis preparedness and response at United Nations duty stations in the field. The Critical Incident Stress Management Unit coordinates the global counselling response during emergencies, conducts needs assessments, provides technical support and advice on how to mitigate the stress of critical incidents and provides preventive stress management training to all United Nations staff;

(f) Office of Information and Communications Technology: responsible for establishing broad disaster recovery principles to ensure the resumption of information and communications technology services for critical technology support after a disruption, and for developing a related programme of work.

8. Paragraphs 28 to 33 of the Secretary-General's report contain more detailed information on the functions of the Emergency Preparedness and Support Team. It is indicated that, since its establishment in 2010 in the aftermath of the Haiti earthquake, the Team has been active on a variety of fronts in accordance with its mandate, which spans preparedness, support during an emergency and post-emergency response. In

particular, the Team has developed a communications strategy, including a website, on the Organization's efforts to support and exercise its duty to care for staff and their families, which articulates the institutional importance placed on health, safety and security and well-being. It has also designed several initiatives with a view to empowering staff to prepare themselves both personally and professionally for emergencies, and a suite of relevant training modules incorporating international best practices is being rolled out across the Organization. Since information-sharing is vital both during and after emergencies, the Team has developed a database management system, through which medical professionals, stress counsellors, management and human resources officers can share time-sensitive information.

9. In response to a query about the specific activities undertaken to improve the personal preparedness of United Nations staff, the Advisory Committee was informed that the Secretariat had implemented a number of measures to strengthen support to staff, including: the development of a communications strategy promoting personal preparedness; the launch of an outreach campaign designed to encourage staff to update their emergency contact information; the roll-out of a self-learning module for managers emphasizing their duty of care; the distribution of materials relating to the "SAFEUN" security and safety awareness campaign for Headquarters staff; the provision of training programmes for first-tier responders; and the updating of the mass casualty incident plan to include training for human resources practitioners on what to do before, during and after a mass casualty incident. The Committee was also provided, upon request, with electronic copies of various brochures and handouts on personal preparedness that are available to staff members. The Committee was informed that steps had been taken to ensure that all staff members were provided with printed documents containing guidance on how to proceed in the event of an emergency affecting the United Nations. **The Committee supports the emphasis placed by the Secretariat on personal preparedness and encourages the Secretary-General to ensure that all staff members have easy access to appropriate information on how to proceed in the event of an emergency.**

10. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 64/260, the Emergency Preparedness and Support Team currently had a staffing complement of five positions (2 P-5, 1 P-4, 1 P-2 and 1 General Service (Other level)) funded under general temporary assistance. The Committee was further informed, upon enquiry, that the review of the workflows and activities of the Team mentioned in paragraph 34 of the Secretary-General's report had been completed. The review, which covered the Team's outputs and programme of work for 2012-2013, revealed that the Team had played a key role in efforts to provide care for staff and their families by, inter alia, enhancing awareness of the Organization's commitment to staff and family members, updating staff on the availability of training and briefing programmes and providing staff, families and survivors with online access to resources and services to support preparedness and post-incident management activities. During its consideration of the Secretary-General's report, the Committee was informed that the current level of resources for the Team would be maintained for the biennium 2014-2015 and that no additional resources would be sought.

11. In paragraph 41 of his report, the Secretary-General indicates that he is in the process of establishing the United Nations Operations and Crisis Centre, which will be located at United Nations Headquarters and comprise staff from the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Safety and Security, Political Affairs and Management,

as well as from the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Centre will provide support to senior leaders across the system with a view to enabling informed, coordinated and timely decision-making and strategic engagement on operational and crisis-related issues. The Advisory Committee notes that, according to the Secretary-General, once the Centre becomes operational, in December 2012, it will have a role in the organizational resilience management system. **The Committee looks forward to receiving more information on the role of the Operations and Crisis Centre in the organizational resilience management system in the next report of the Secretary-General on this question.**

12. It is indicated in paragraph 42 of the Secretary-General's report that the successful implementation of the organizational resilience management system will be strengthened by successful partnerships. According to the Secretary-General, partnerships will allow the Organization not only to develop best practices in coordination with other United Nations entities, civil society, the private sector and Governments, but also to identify opportunities to integrate capacities to address vulnerabilities and enhance communications. In response to an enquiry about current and potential future partners, the Committee was informed that, at Headquarters, Citigroup had facilitated two organizational resilience management exercises, and that the Secretary-General intends to pursue similar collaborations with United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and appropriate partners from the private sector and academia. At the United Nations Office at Geneva, the organizational resilience management system had been discussed by an inter-agency group on business continuity. It would also be on the agenda of the next inter-agency meeting of security focal points. The Committee was informed that discussing the concept of organizational resilience management at inter-agency forums would lead to greater coherence in its implementation.

V. Governance and accountability

13. The Secretary-General indicates in section VI of his report that the strategy, policymaking, governance and oversight functions for emergency management would be performed by the senior emergency policy team, which is chaired by the Chef de Cabinet and composed of senior management of most departments of the Secretariat as well as high-level representatives of the specialized agencies, funds and programmes based in New York. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, if the organizational resilience management system approach was approved by the General Assembly, the senior emergency policy team would designate a specific project owner at its next meeting in early 2013. **The Committee expects that the Secretary-General will identify the project owner of the organizational resilience management system in his next report on this question.**

14. The Secretary-General states that a formal structure will be responsible for implementing the system at each duty station. At offices away from Headquarters, such structures will have similar responsibilities to those of the Crisis Operations Group (A/67/266, para. 44). At the field level, the Secretary-General indicates that United Nations country teams would adopt a two-tiered governance structure (that is, a high-level body responsible for policy decisions on emergency management and an operational-level body responsible for the implementation of decisions and emergency management operations) similar to that adopted at Headquarters. In the

Secretary-General's view, the security management team is a suitable entity for policy decisions at the country team level, although decisions on the most suitable mechanism and entities for the governance of the emergency management framework would rest with each United Nations country team.

VI. Implementation

15. In paragraphs 48 to 51 of his report, the Secretary-General describes the implementation, using the five-step cycle referred to in paragraph 6 above, of the organizational resilience management system at Headquarters, which was undertaken, on a pilot basis, from June to November 2010. In November 2010, after completing its final review of the pilot, the senior emergency policy team endorsed the organizational resilience management system as the emergency management framework for the United Nations, thereby laying the foundation for its full implementation throughout the United Nations system.

16. Paragraphs 54 to 59 of the report provide more detailed information on the implementation, pursuant to General Assembly resolution 66/246, of the resilient information and communications technology infrastructure at the Secretariat in New York. The Secretary-General indicates, in particular, that owing to the number of critical applications presently being hosted at both the primary data centre in the North Lawn Building and the secondary data centre in Piscataway, New Jersey, the Office of Information and Communications Technology has been reviewing operational requirements to ensure continuity of those applications in the event of a crisis. It is envisaged that the secondary data centre will continue to be needed until the end of 2016 for all critical applications that have not been migrated to enterprise data centres, including local critical applications and legacy enterprise applications, and that a reduced and more permanent solution will be put into place effective 1 January 2017. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that the need to maintain the secondary data centre until the end of 2016 (rather than until 2014, as previously envisaged) was due to the requirement to retain the Integrated Information Management System (IMIS) in the Secretariat until Umoja was fully implemented.

17. With regard to the implementation of the organizational resilience management system at offices away from Headquarters and field missions, it is stated in paragraph 52 of the report that, in parallel with the pilot implementation of the system at Headquarters, the Departments of Peacekeeping Operations, Field Support and Political Affairs, in close coordination with the Department of Management, initiated the implementation, on a pilot basis, of the organizational resilience management system in field presences. In that context, the Secretary-General reports that, in June 2012, a pilot organizational resilience management system exercise was conducted in Nicosia, Cyprus, with a view to testing the crisis management, business continuity, medical mass casualty, information and communications technology disaster recovery, staff and family support and security plans of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus. The exercise led to the establishment of an exercise planning template to be used by other peacekeeping missions. The Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 61 of his report that all United Nations locations and field missions are expected to have initiated implementation of the emergency management framework by the end of 2013.

18. In its previous report on this subject, the Advisory Committee requested that, in the follow-up report to be submitted to the General Assembly at its sixty-seventh

session, the Secretary-General present a full picture of the measures taken and envisaged to extend the scope of the organizational resilience management system to cover the agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system (A/66/7/Add.10, para. 19). In paragraph 62 of his most recent report, the Secretary-General indicates that, with a view to extending implementation of the organizational resilience management system to the United Nations specialized agencies, funds and programmes, he envisages initiating a formal consultative process through his Policy Committee. Once the latter has endorsed the recommendation to implement the organizational resilience management system across the United Nations system, the Secretary-General will refer the recommendation to the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination for further deliberation and agreement by its High-level Committee on Management.

19. The Secretary-General indicates in paragraph 63 of his report that the working group on organizational resilience management plans to conduct a pilot exercise at an integrated field mission. Once the exercise has been completed, the working group will develop recommendations for the roll-out of the emergency management framework to all United Nations country teams. It is envisaged that the roll-out process will begin in 2013. **The Advisory Committee points out, in this regard, that United Nations country teams are present in many locations where the Organization does not have integrated field missions. Since the planned pilot exercise will not cover that scenario, the Committee expects that the Secretary-General will include, in his next report on this question, an explanation of how the emergency management framework will be implemented at locations without integrated field missions.**

VII. Performance indicators

20. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was provided with information on the performance indicators to be used to measure the impact of the organizational resilience management system. Table 1 below illustrates the maturity model that will be used to measure implementation at the macro level.

Table 1

	System basics			*System implementation*		
Maturity level	*Senior management commitment*	*Professional support*	*Governance*	*All participating agencies*	*Integrated planning*	*Cross-functional*
Pre-awareness	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Project approach	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Programme approach	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Systems approach	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Management system	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No
Holistic management	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No	Yes/No

21. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that performance indicators at the micro level would focus on the achievement of operational components. A draft set of indicators is annexed to the present report. **The Committee expects that, in his next report on this question, the Secretary-General will provide an assessment of the effectiveness of the implementation of the organizational resilience management system measured against the indicators set out in the annex to the present report.**

VIII. Cost

22. The Advisory Committee was informed, upon enquiry, that to date the organizational resilience management system had been implemented using existing resources. Table 2 below illustrates the days per annum devoted solely to the development and implementation of the system by the relevant staff members.

Table 2

Position	*Department/office*	*Days per annum*
Chief, Business Continuity Management Unit (P-5)	Department of Management/Business Continuity Management Unit	4.5
Business Continuity Specialist (P-4)	Department of Management/Business Continuity Management Unit	15
Chief, Emergency Preparedness and Support Team (P-5)	Department of Management/Emergency Preparedness and Support Team	4.5
Human Resources Officer (P-4)	Department of Management/Emergency Preparedness and Support Team	4.5
Associate Administrative Officer (P-2)	Department of Management/Emergency Preparedness and Support Team	4.5
Senior Medical Officer (P-5)	Department of Management/United Nations Medical Emergency Response Team	9.5
Chief, Field Support Service (D-1)	Department of Safety and Security/Field Support Service	3.5
Programme Officer (P-3)	Department of Safety and Security/Field Support Service	7
Focal Point for Security (P-5)	Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Office of the Under-Secretary-General	26.5
Organizational Resilience Officer (P-4)	Department of Peacekeeping Operations/Office of the Under-Secretary-General	1.5
Information and Communications Technology Officer (P-3)	Department of Field Support/Information and Communications Technology Division	2
Business Continuity Programme Manager (P-4)	United Nations Office at Geneva/Division of Administration	7

23. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was also informed that the costs associated with the above-mentioned person-hours amounted to $63,750 per annum. It was expected that the current level of activity would continue and that, as the project advances, the organizational resilience management system would continue to be implemented using existing resources. **While noting that the Secretary-General**

intends to continue implementing the organizational resilience management system from within existing resources, the Committee considers it important that the actual cost of the initiative is documented. The Committee therefore recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to provide a detailed accounting of the full cost of the organizational resilience management system in his next report on this question.

24. Upon enquiry as to the potential economies of scale to be realized through implementation of the organizational resilience management system, the Advisory Committee was informed that the system was a resource multiplier. Experience to date indicated that its extension across the United Nations system would lead to the following:

(a) Harmonized deliverables, improving effectiveness and reducing the time and resources required to implement them;

(b) Clearly defined roles and responsibilities and integrated workflows, leading to more rapid agreement between organizations when establishing operations in new environments;

(c) Common terminology and definition of concepts, reducing the need for meetings, accelerating implementation and fostering innovation;

(d) Cross-departmental collaboration, resulting in the dismantling of silos, greater innovation and better use of resources;

(e) Increased awareness of ongoing activities and projects across multiple organizations, leading to positive effects in terms of collaboration and supporting linked projects and change management;

(f) Elimination of overlaps between initiatives;

(g) Improved interoperability between organizations;

(h) Integrated lessons learned, providing a sound basis for continually adapting and improving risk prevention and emergency preparedness and response.

25. The Advisory Committee was also informed, upon enquiry, that the harmonization of processes, procedures and systems anticipated as a result of the implementation of the organizational resilience management system would lead to the identification of redundant systems, which would then be strategically retired. **The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to include the realization of economies of scale and the retirement of redundant systems in the performance indicators referred to in paragraph 21 above.**

IX. Hurricane Sandy

26. In late October 2012, while the report of the Secretary-General on the organizational resilience management system was under consideration by the Advisory Committee, Hurricane Sandy hit the New York area. The Committee was briefed by representatives of the Secretary-General on the extent of the damage to United Nations Headquarters and on the effectiveness of the organizational resilience management system in addressing the challenges faced.

27. Most importantly, the Advisory Committee was informed that there had been no reports of injuries to staff members or their dependants.

28. The Advisory Committee was further informed that the core infrastructure of the Headquarters premises had been assessed as intact, but that substantial damages had been sustained as a result of flooding in the basements. For safety reasons, and in particular to prevent the spread of fire, power had been completely shut down for 24 hours in the Secretariat, South Annex and Library Buildings. In addition, the cooling system had been shut down because both the main and the temporary chiller plants had been flooded. In terms of repairs, some parts of the electrical switchboard, as well as the electrical system of the main chiller plant, would need replacing. The leased digital printers in the printing shop, as well as other equipment, supplies and materials located in the third basement, had been damaged. The Committee was informed that it was too early to produce cost estimates for the damages and that consultations with insurance companies and contractors were ongoing. **The Committee expects that full cost estimates of the damages incurred as a result of Hurricane Sandy, as well as information on insurance coverage for those damages, will be provided to the General Assembly in the context of the report referred to in paragraph 30 below.**

29. According to representatives of the Secretary-General, the emergency management framework functioned effectively during the Hurricane. Emergency response and harmonized decision-making had been coordinated through the Crisis Operations Group, and pre-event preparedness had significantly reduced the damage sustained. Although there had been some connectivity problems as a result of difficulties experienced with the migration of systems to the secondary data centre, critical information and communications technology systems had been maintained with no loss of data. Representatives of the Secretary-General also indicated that, throughout the event, updated information had been communicated to staff and delegations via e-mail, the dedicated staff information website and the telephone hotline, although it was recognized that communication with Member States and staff required improvement. **The Advisory Committee notes the difficulties experienced with the migration of systems to the secondary data centre and recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to investigate their causes with a view to taking appropriate remedial measures. The Committee stresses the importance of ensuring that Member States and staff receive updated information in the event of emergencies affecting the United Nations. To that end, steps should be taken to ensure that the home page of the United Nations website, the dedicated staff information website and all internal communications systems continue functioning and remain updated throughout emergency situations.**

30. Representatives of the Secretary-General also informed the Advisory Committee that, in order to further strengthen organizational resilience, the Secretary-General had convened a senior-level task force, chaired by the Chef de Cabinet, to examine lessons learned and the requirement for additional emergency response measures. **The Committee welcomes the decision of the Secretary-General to convene a task force. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit to it, at the first part of its resumed sixty-seventh session, a report on the outcome of the work of the task force, including proposals to address any shortcomings identified.**

X. Action to be taken by the General Assembly

31. In paragraph 64 of his report, the Secretary-General requests that the General Assembly approve the organizational resilience management system approach as the emergency management framework. Upon enquiry, the Advisory Committee was informed that, while implementation of the framework had already begun, formal approval by the General Assembly was required to institutionalize the initiative and to set a clear strategic approach for its further expansion to cover the specialized agencies, funds and programmes. **The Committee has no objection to the course of action proposed by the Secretary-General. The Committee recommends that the General Assembly request the Secretary-General to submit, to its sixty-eighth session, a progress report on the implementation of the organizational resilience management system. The report should include detailed information on the steps taken to expand the system to include the specialized agencies, funds and programmes, as well as the information requested in paragraphs 11, 13, 19, 21, 23 and 25 above.**

Annex

Performance indicators (micro level) for the organizational resilience management system

Category	*Objectives*	*Indicators*
Training and awareness	Ensure all staff are aware of:	Awareness campaign conducted
	Crisis management and response procedures and practices	
	Preparedness plan content	
Decision-making (leadership, responsibilities)	Exercise the workflow decision-making process of the Crisis Management Team	Crisis Management Team orientation/simulation conducted
	Confirm that appropriate delegations of authority are in place	
	Exercise the capacity of the office to respond to a crisis event	Full-scale simulation (crisis management, operations recovery and response) conducted
	Validate access and use of core systems	
	Identify core system dependencies	
	Identify gaps in the recovery plan	
	Update the recovery plan	
Communication (alert, notification)	Ensure clear instructions are communicated through the communication tree	Staff communication tree exercised
	Validate contact information for staff	
	Validate accessibility of critical staff	
	Update communication tree information	
Business process recovery	Ensure that all staff are capable of implementing recovery strategies	Telecommuting exercise conducted
	Validate critical business processes and recovery time objectives	
	Validate previous test deviations and verify that problems have been corrected	Staff meeting using peer-to-peer technology (e.g. Skype) conducted
	Validate technology requirements	
	Validate additional requirements	Functional technology test (core information and communications technology systems) conducted
	Identify gaps in the recovery plan	

Category	*Objectives*	*Indicators*
	Update recovery plan	Operate from the recovery location
After-action review	Identify corrective actions	After-action reviews conducted after each event and exercise
	Assign tasks, schedules and responsibilities	
	Monitor the implementation progress of corrective action	
	Assign tasks, schedules and responsibilities and integrate into various workplans	
Testing	Validate plans, policies, procedures and systems against established standards	Test conducted
	Identify deficient plans, policies, procedures or systems for subsequent corrective actions	
Updating and endorsement	Executive endorsement of the updated preparedness plans	Plans updated
	Identify deficient plans, policies and procedures	Plans approved